

# Ghana

## Urban Ethnomusicology

Study the influence, impact, and evolution of musical forms in Ghana. Music plays a central role in traditional and contemporary cultural expression in Ghana, where it often has a multi-dimensional meaning, and includes dance, song and drama. Popular music in Ghana has often set the standard for West African musical expression, and Ghanaian artists are well known on the world music scene. Additionally, there are forms of musical expression that have evolved in Ghana over the past 20 years that are little known outside of their regions.

During this seven-week program, students have the opportunity to explore urban influences on music and its evolution, incorporating an examination of both traditional and contemporary elements. The program focuses on the processes that take place in the evolution of new music, dance, vocal, or performance styles as a result of an urban environment. Students participate in homestays in Accra and Kumasi, allowing them firsthand knowledge of the role of music in everyday life. Additionally, students participate in group workshops and receive individual instruction on a musical form of their choice, allowing students to concentrate on any aspect of Ghanaian music.

The program is based in Accra, with educational excursions to Kumasi and rural areas in the Volta region. In addition to classroom study, students attend performances and workshops at the University of Ghana, the W.E.B. DuBois Centre, the Ghana Dance Ensemble, the Kumasi Center for National Culture, and local venues.



Performances, workshops, and individual instruction help students gain an understanding of the key role music plays in Ghanaian cultural expression. Photo by student Rachel Shuman.

### Coursework

#### AFRS 3000: Urban Ethnomusicology Seminar

2 credits/30 class hours

Lectures and seminars provide an understanding of the historical, social, economic, and political forces that have shaped the contemporary music scene in Ghana today. Topics include history, geography, and urban issues, as well as ethnomusicology, dance styles, and use and cultural background of various instruments.

#### PRAC 3000: Practical Music Studies

6 credits/90 class hours

A combination of group workshops consisting of drumming/dancing classes, performances, and private instruction. Because Ghanaian music often incorporates dance, song, and drama, students can concentrate on any of these elements of performance.

**Homestays:** Three weeks in Accra and one week in Kumasi

**Educational Excursions:** May include Kumasi, Tamale in the Northern region, and rural areas in the Volta region.

**Duration:** Seven weeks (early June to late July)

**Student Eligibility:** At least one semester of college-level work at the time of application and good academic standing with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5.

**Prerequisites:** None